

Iraqi Media Watch: March 22, 2006

Current Translations from the Iraqi Press

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Az-Zaman

The *Az-Zaman* newspaper reported that negotiations between Iran and the United States may start as soon as next week when the ambassadors of the two countries to Iraq are supposed to meet in Baghdad. The paper quoted Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, as saying, "If Iranian officials are going to be able to express Iran's views concerning Iraq, then [I see] no reason for not doing so." The paper noted that Iraqi PM Ibrahim al-Ja'fari rejected the idea of any American-Iranian negotiations about Iraq without the presence of Iraqi representation, according to the paper.

Indeed, everyone, except for the party of Abdulaziz al-Hakim, the man behind the plan, has voiced their concern. Of course, other factions, the Shi'a, the Kurds, and secular politicians are very uncomfortable with American acknowledgement of an Iranian role in Iraq.

If successful, this dialogue might be the beginning to further direct negotiations between the two countries, whose relations have remained cut since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979.

The paper also reported on the news that Naji Sabri al-Hadithi, the former Iraqi foreign minister, was on the pay of the CIA through French agents. The CIA have not commented on the news reported originally by NBC. Al-Hadithi, according to the paper, called the reports "false claims," saying that "the information portrayed in this strange story is entirely false and baseless." The paper quoted him giving a speech similar to the ones he used to make during the days he was serving Saddam. The report alleges that he received \$100,000 for allegedly serving two masters, but the information he gave was ignored because he told his contacts that Iraq did not have WMDs.

It is very hard to confirm such stories with all parties refusing to confirm the information. However, the "no comment" from the CIA, the fact that al-Hadithi was not arrested and tried, as he should have been (he was allowed to leave Iraq to a safe location for no reason whatsoever), and the fact that his brother, who used to be a high official, was killed by the Baath regime, all bode well

for the information in the story, at least until the CIA enlightens us about the subject and the U.S. government provides an equally good reason for allowing him to leave Iraq instead of bringing him to justice with the rest of the Saddam's criminal gang.

[*Al-Adala*](#)

Al-Adala, a paper whose parent company is headquartered in Syria, reported that U.S. forces began an investigation concerning the "random shooting by U.S. forces while conducting a raid, leading to the death of Iraqi civilians." The paper reports on two different stories regarding the number of dead people. The Americans report "the death of four Iraqis including a woman and a child." The paper, however, quoted a source in the Iraqi police as saying that American forces "killed 11 people including five women, two men, and four children before they destroy[ed] the house."

The paper continued its publication of Paul Bremer's book about his time in Iraq, highlighting the following sentence from Bremer:

"The only case the Governing Council worked on with record speed was the payment of salaries for its members. A sub-committee headed by [Ahmad] Chalabi proposed a very high budget, calling for \$50,000 a year for each member and \$4,000 for the ministers with mileage compensation for 50,000 miles a month, as David Oliver intelligently suggested, in a country with bad roads."

This, by itself, should send Oliver and Bremer to court, because these people did not drive outside the Green Zone, which is 11 miles from one end to another. It is clearly gross mismanagement (the polite word for the concept) of the funds entrusted in these people's hands. This, in Bremer's words, is the kind of work he was given a medal for.